The most interesting person I met on the Bobonaza was the old chief Palati, famous in the whole of Eastern Ecuador as a sorcerer, formerly also as a warrior. Palati was the oldest Indian I ever knew, and in 1917 when I saw him the first time must have been over a hundred years old. No Indian is able to tell his age exactly. 'We cannot reckon', is the answer one regularly receives on asking an Indian how old he is. Palati's age, however, I was able to establish with a good deal of certainty. Being, like most Indians, fond of wandering, he had formerly visited the civilized parts of Ecuador also and, according to his own assertion, in his youth had visited Marshall Sucre in Quito. The great Ecuadorian champion of liberty lived in Quito in the years 1826 to 1829, from which I infer that Palati must have been born during the first years of the nineteenth century. This accords with statements which I have received from the whites. A man who had lived in the neighbourhood of Canelos for 30 years told me that when he first arrived there, Palati was supposed [35] to be over 90 years old. He added that during this long time the old Indian chief had not notably changed. When I met Palati he was still a very vigorous old man; he was able to undertake long wanderings, he had preserved his mental faculties, and became quite eloquent when he began to talk about his ancient warlike exploits and his enemies the Jibaro Indians. It was Palati's ambition to play the role of a political leader among his people, and such, as a matter of fact, had been his position for many decades. Being brave, clever and

cunning, and in possession of the kind of eloquence which is so much appreciated among the Indians, he had actually succeeded in maintaining his influence, which growing age had not lessened as is usual, but strengthened."